ALASKA NATIVE RIGHTS SINCE STATEHOOD

How has the situation in Alaska changed?

Level: High School (grades 9-12)

Background

From the Alaska Purchase of 1867, it took 89 years for the area to attain statehood in 1959. During that time the people who lived in the district (later a territory) struggled to create a system of government so that they could rule themselves independently. Use of the land and natural resources and the role and rights of the indigenous Native peoples were among the important issues with which people wrestled. The campaign for statehood peaked in 1955 with the Alaska constitutional convention, after which voters approved a constitution that took effect upon statehood.

Summary

Students read sections of the *Eight Stars of Gold* exhibit catalog to get a glimpse of the issues of Alaska Native rights and sovereignty prior to state-hood. They investigate and research land rights and the conditions of Alaska Natives over the past century and write compare/ contrast papers based on their findings.

Estimated Time

• 50 minutes for initial discussion, followed by 100 – 150 minutes (or two/three class periods) for research and timelines drafting

• 50 minutes for final presentations, and response and evaluation

In this activity students will focus on the following:

Alaska Content Standards

Government and Citizenship

C.3 Understand the constitution of Alaska and the Statehood Compact

C.4 Understand the importance of the historical and current roles of Alaska Native communities

C.7 Understand the obligations that land and resource ownership place on the residents and government of the state

D.3 Understand how national politics are interrelated with the politics and interests of the state

Activities

Step One: Read, summarize and discuss

• Have the students read, "The Alaska Purchase and the steps toward statehood" (Eight Stars of Gold, pp. 5 – 7 and pp. 14 – 17). Ask students to note references to the management of fishing and hunting rights at the time and to any references to Alaska Natives.

• After reading, have several students orally summarize the two sections, including references to land rights and Alaska Natives, and to add any other information they may have about this period of Alaska's history.

• In either a large class format or in smaller groups, have students discuss the questions:

1. In what ways do absentee business interests still control the state?

2. To what degree do you think Alaska still has "colonial status?" What would change that status?

• Students should cite specific examples to support their opinions.

• OPTION: Have students write a persuasive essay or debate the two questions.

Step Two: Read and research

• Divide the class into two groups. Each group must choose a reporter who will verbally report to the class the work of the group at a later date. Using the Internet and printed resources, students individually or in pairs within the groups, read and research key events and issues relating to fishing and hunting in Alaska and/or the rights of Alaska Natives. In their reading and research, students should look for any interplay between land rights and the use of the land

by Alaska Natives and be able to describe those relationships throughout Alaska's history. A good starting point is the exhibit catalog that they just read and the on-line state historical newspaper archive.

- Group 1: Research the rights and responsibilities of Alaska Natives from 1900 – present. Draft a timeline of significant events in the history of Alaska Natives .
- Group 2: Research the management of fishing and hunting rights in Alaska from 1900 – present. Draft a general 100-year timeline of the management of fishing and hunting rights in the state.
- Both groups should write key events in a summary form on the group's timeline. The key events can be political, economic, social and/or environmental. Explanations of why selected events are key events should also accompany the timeline. Students can attach the explanations with index cards, a printout, a written key, etc.

Step Three: Report and evaluate presentations

- After investigating and noting key events, a reporter for one group presents the timeline and the rationale for why each of the key events on the timeline is there. Members of the other group then ask questions to clarify or extend the points made by the presenting group. Any questions that the group cannot answer are noted on the board or chart paper for future research and inquiry.
- The second group then presents and answers questions.

Assessment
Individuals use the Oral Presentation Scoring Guide to evaluate their own and others' work. The teacher evaluations summarizes and provides feedback to each group.

Materials
- Chart paper and markers for timeline
- Oral Presentation Scoring Guide

Vocabulary
sovereignty n. Supreme power, especially over a body politic; enjoying autonomy

Resources
Exhibit catalog: Spartz, India. *Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag*. Juneau: Alaska State Museum, 2001.

Alaska Geographic Alliance
www.ak-geo-alliance.org/
This excellent resource for research about Alaska includes maps, charts, and data in a format easily understood by students.

Alaska Newspaper Project
www.library.state.ak.us/hist/newspaper.html

McPhee, John. *Coming Into the Country*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976.
This book has opinions and analyses of issues relating to land rights in Alaska, pp. 17 -21 and 83 -87

For a historical look at Alaska Natives:
Alaska's Gold
www.library.state.ak.us/goldrush
This database has primary source documents with lessons about Alaska's Lode. It is a searchable database with over 3,000 documents. Go to Legacy, then "How did the Gold Rush Impact Native Alaskans?" Read, "Can the Land be Shared?" and the laws, the primary source documents that describe a significant case involving the Tanana Indians in 1915.

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network
www.ankn.uaf.edu.
This site provides a searchable database, suitable for students, on all aspects of Native life and history.

Langdon, Steve. *The Native People of Alaska*. Anchorage: Greatland Graphics, 1993. ISBN 92-074225 The introduction and chapter seven provide a good source for student research. This excellent book provides a complete chapter on each Alaska Native Group.

Ritter, Harry. *Alaska's History: The People, Land and Events of the North Country*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1993. ISBN 0-88240-432-6 This is excellent and concise review providing snapshots of key events in Alaska history.

For a historical look at the history of hunting and fishing rights:
ANCSA: 1971
www.alaskool.org/projects/subsistence/timeline/ANCSA.htm

Frequently Asked Questions about Alaska: a historical timeline
http://sled.alaska.edu/akfaq/akchron.html

Legal History of the Subsistence Issue
www.akrepublicans.org/Ogansubsistence.htm

Native American fishing rights
www.indians.org/library/bibf.html

Native Americans and the Environment
www.cnie.org/NAE/arctic.html

Oral Presentation Scoring Guide: Grades 3-12

SCORING: Speakers may receive any score from 1 to 5 in each of the seven dimensions when the speech shows characteristics from more than one column. For example: A speaker's ideas and content may "show clear purpose" (5), but have "skimpy supporting details" (3); thus the rating would be a 4 for ideas and content. (Sitka School District: Oral Checklist, 11/25/96)

DIMENSION \ SCORE	1	3	5
IDEAS/CONTENT	❏ Purpose unclear ❏ Central idea lacking ❏ Little/no knowledge of topic ❏ Details missing	❏ Purpose reasonably clear ❏ Ideas could be more insightful ❏ Knowledge of topic limited ❏ Skimpy supporting details	❏ Clear purpose ❏ Ideas conveyed in original, insightful manner ❏ Knows topic well ❏ Effective amount of detail ❏ Holds readers' attention
ORGANIZATION	❏ Little sense of direction or sequence ❏ Details, events do not relate to topic ❏ No clear beginning or ending ❏ No transitions	❏ Ideas/details in sequence ❏ Details missing ❏ Weak start or finish ❏ Some transitions missing	❏ Details fit, sequence effective ❏ Details enhance listeners' interest ❏ Strong intro/satisfying conclusion ❏ Transitions work well
RAPPORT	❏ Little effort to deal w/topic ❏ Tone inappropriate for both audience interest and/or level of knowledge	❏ Tries to deal honestly with topic ❏ Style/tone may or may not be appropriate to audience interest and/or level of knowledge	❏ Honest, sincere, cares for topic ❏ Style and tone capitalize on audience interest and level of knowledge ❏ Speaks directly to listener
LANGUAGE SKILLS	❏ Limited vocabulary ❏ Incomplete thoughts make it hard to understand and follow	❏ Adequate, but ordinary vocabulary ❏ Awkward wording occasionally make understanding unclear	❏ Accurate, interesting vocabulary appropriate to topic ❏ Wording is full, rich, enhances understanding ❏ Eloquent, smooth, natural sentence structure
PHYSICAL DELIVERY	❏ Delivery distracting, posture and movement ❏ Minimal or absent eye contact	❏ Some nervous gestures, stiff, tense or too relaxed ❏ Sporadic eye contact or with only one person	❏ Relaxed posture, confident ❏ Maintains eye contact w/audience
VOCAL DELIVERY	❏ Enunciation, volume or pacing a problem ❏ Difficult to hear or understand ❏ Monotone ❏ Frequent pauses ❏ Difficult to follow	❏ Generally uses appropriate enunciation, volume, pacing ❏ Sometimes difficult to understand ❏ Ordinary inflection ❏ Random pauses ❏ Some gap fillers ("um," "er," etc.)	❏ Enunciates clearly, effective volume, pacing ❏ Easily understood ❏ Inflection conveys emotion and enhances meaning ❏ Pauses to collect thoughts or build suspense ❏ Easy to follow
VISUALS	❏ Visual aid is present ❏ Does not show careful preparation ❏ May be unrelated to topic	❏ Visual aid adds meaning ❏ Preparation is adequate ❏ Visual aid is somewhat related to presentation	❏ Visual aid enhances presentation ❏ Carefully prepared ❏ Interesting, appropriate to topic